

# **Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes**

## **June 6, 2007, 4:00 P.M.**

### **Acton Town Hall**

Present: Bettina Abe, Joan Cirillo, Bob Guba, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge (minute-taker), Nan Towle Millett, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Laurie Ullmann

May minutes: The May minutes were accepted.

Summer meetings: Jim asked whether we wanted to schedule one or two summer meetings, or a party, or a combination of meeting(s) and a party. Both Philip and Bob stated their preference for having meetings every month, even if attendance at summer meetings is lower than usual, so it was decided to schedule meetings for July 11 and August 1. No one present offered to host a party, but that possibility remains open—either to follow one of the meetings or on another date—if anyone would like to host it.

E-mail rules: There was a brief discussion to follow up on e-mail communication since Jim distributed his “LSC Chair statement on respect, communications, and decision-making” in March. It was noted that the volume of e-mails being sent out to the LSCom list had declined, and while Jim reiterated that e-mail should not be used for decision-making or advocacy, he wants to be sure people feel free to use it for information sharing and other general purposes.

Quail Ridge Country Club update: Since our May meeting Jim and Joan met with Roland Bartl, Acton's Town Planner, and then Jim spoke with Dennis Ring, the development manager for QRCC, about our concern that the proposed access trail connecting Nagog Hill to Route 2A will survive any changes in QRCC's plans. They found that the QRCC is currently talking to the Planning Board about the possibility of scaling back the golf course from 18 holes to nine and putting in houses on the land that is freed up. Our request that a clear agreement about a trail be negotiated between the QRCC and the town as part of any future plans will be on the Planning Board's agenda for its next meeting on June 12. Jim will not be able to attend that meeting, however, so it was agreed that Joan, in consultation with Jim and Philip, will write a letter to the Planning Board that will be sent prior to the meeting.

Heath Hen Meadow boundary/encroachment issue: Jim reported that he had a friendly discussion with the owners of 6 Billings Street about their dog, whose backyard cable lead allows him to reach around three feet short of the trail behind the house. However, walkers may come within range of the dog because the trail is not very clear in that area (although the extent of the dog's range *is* clear). It was suggested that wood chips could be put down to delineate the trail more clearly, and Jim will speak with Dave Cochrane about this. It should be noted that the dog is friendly and has caused no problems that we are aware of; Jim was simply following up on a report by a walker who was wondering if the situation might cause a problem. During his visit Jim also asked the owners if they knew where their back boundary line is, but they are not sure of this. However, they are considering putting in a fence, and if they do, they will have a survey done. At that point, if we find that our trail is on their land, we would reroute it.

Senior Service Day: Joan reported that her Senior Service Day project on May 4, with 12 students, went well (once the students found their way to the Nagog Hill parking lot). They put down more wood chips along the access trail beside Hy-Bid Farm and in a few spots in the meadow behind Jimmy Young's house and cleaned up the burn pile site in that meadow. Joan said it was clear that the students should be provided with a map, since they provide their own transportation and had trouble finding the right parking lot, and she also

discovered that town truckloads vary in size, so it might be better to request wood chips by specifying the number of cubic yards needed rather than just asking for a truckload.

Eagle Scout project at Nagog Hill: Bob reported that the Eagle Scout boardwalk project at Nagog Hill has been largely completed, although he plans to ask the Scout to make a few final adjustments to his work. The project was an extension of both ends of the boardwalk on the yellow trail near the meadow. It was noted that although Tom signed off on the Scout's plan in November, neither Bob (as trails/project coordinator) nor Joan (as Nagog Hill steward) was aware of the project until the end of April. A related problem was that the Scout did the project so close to his 18th birthday (Eagle Scout projects have to be completed before the Scout turns 18). Because of these two circumstances, Bob felt that the work was carried out before the design had been properly finalized.

Jim reported that, in light of these problems, he met with Tom Tidman earlier this week and reviewed Scout project policy. In the future Tom and Jim will make sure that both Bob and the land steward of the conservation area in question are involved early on in any Scout project. Also, Scouts building boardwalks will be given access to our construction guidelines so that they understand the standards our boardwalks need to meet.

Chamber update: Nan reported that more test pits were dug in the chamber and pen area in May. The tarp has been removed from the top of the chamber and a load of pine duff that Nan gathered was put on top. She plans to go back soon with a small group of friends to temporarily remove the pine duff, spread the loam/compost that has already been delivered, and re-cover it with the pine duff. The top remains surrounded by Caution tape with No Trespassing signs. The orange snow fence around the site also remains in place but has two large openings, and it is now possible to walk into the chamber.

The next step is to clarify the access trails. The main (i.e., publicly identified) access trail from the adjacent neighborhood will be via the red trail at the end of Northbriar Rd. to the yellow trail. (Nan noted that the beginning of the red trail, near the sidewalk on Milldam, needs to be brushed out.) A secondary access will be from the end of Milldam Rd., where there is a 15' wide easement to the conservation land. An informal access trail from Sawmill Rd. is used primarily by the local neighborhood residents. From the yellow trail the chamber is reached by a short unblazed side trail (which, beyond the chamber, becomes the Milldam and Sawmill accesses just mentioned); the plan is to slightly reroute this trail up to the chamber entrance. A final access point is from the railroad bed (future Rail Trail). Presently this is quite wide, since it was used for materials access during the restoration work, but it will need to be made less conspicuous.

Trail Through Time: Nan also reported that the Trail Through Time group has had one formal meeting and that two of the principal members are the Narragansett tribe's Historic Preservation Officer and a Carlisle resident who is on the Carlisle Conservation Commission's subcommittee that is concerned with land stewardship.

Invasives: Jim reported that quite a bit of garlic mustard has been pulled from both the Wood Lane entrance to the Arboretum and the Wheeler Lane entrance to Nashoba Brook, and he hopes to get more done in the next four weeks, concentrating on Wheeler Lane.

Jim will be leading a walk about invasives at the Arboretum on Saturday, June 9, at noon.

Arboretum update: Bettina reported a leaning tree and some rotting benches. Bob will cut down the tree but said that the benches are not our responsibility. Bettina also handed out flyers advertising a new Arboretum map and plant lists for the four maintained gardens (butterfly, hosta, herb, and wildflower). This "Pocket Packet" is available for \$5 at the Town

Clerk's counter at Town Hall. Nan had some FAA application forms available and noted that membership is down; the Pocket Packets are free to new members.

Consideration of Bettina Abe as new land steward: Bettina was approved as steward of the canoe launch.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 11, at 4:00 P.M.